

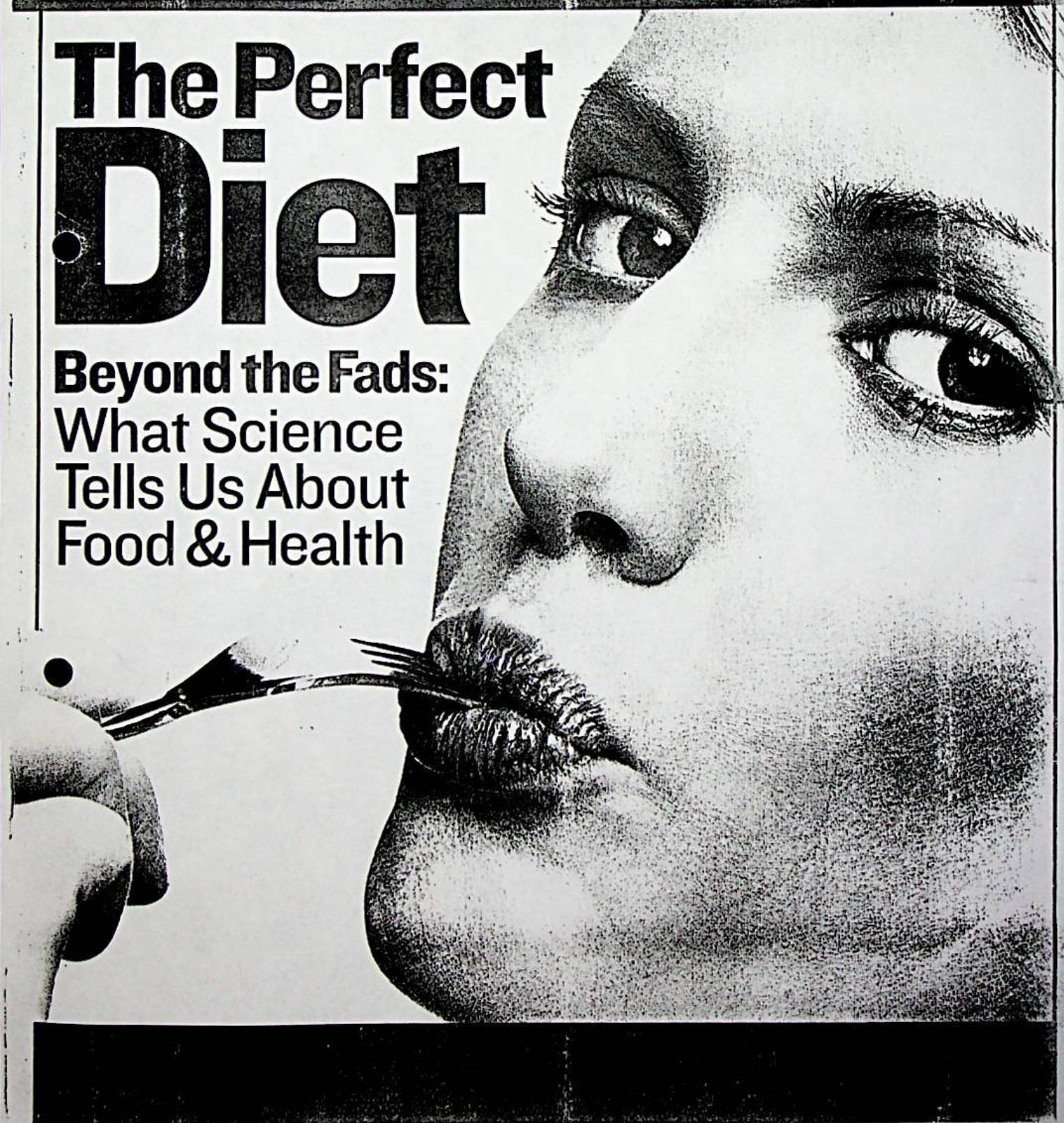
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The Former Face of Evil

Muammar Kaddafi on the Pan Am 103 bombing, the fate of Saddam Hussein and weapons of mass destruction



'NOW IT IS TIME FOR PEACE': Libyan leader Muammar Kaddafi at an Arab Summit conference with Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1969; in Rome two months ago

BY LALLY WEYMOUTH

IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW IN TRIPOLI LAST WEEK, Libyan strongman Muammar Kaddafi revealed that Libya is now providing intelligence to the United States about Al Qaeda. Indeed, U.S. officials concede that the former master of terror appears to have gotten out of the terrorism business. Kaddafi made it clear in the interview that he would like to see U.N. sanctions lifted. But sanctions will remain unless Libya accepts responsibility for the 1988 bombing of Pan Am 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. In spite of his recent cooperation with the United States against Al Qaeda, Kaddafi denounced the American plan to overthrow Saddam Hussein. But President George W. Bush's tough policy on Iraq has had an effect here. One of Kaddafi's senior officials recently asked a British diplomat, "Will they come after us?" Excerpts:

NEWSWEEK: A Libyan official was convicted for the bombing of Pan Am 103. In order for U.N. sanctions to be lifted, Libya must take responsibility for the bombing. Will you accept responsibility? KADDAFI: The whole world bears witness to this man's in-

nocence. It was not possible for the court to prove that Abdelbaset Ali Mohamed al-Megrahi put the bomb in the baggage. You agreed to have the two Libyan suspects tried in a Scottish court in the Netherlands. One was ac-

quitted; one convicted. Don't you accept the court's finding? The court came to its finding without evidence. There are five conditions Libya must fulfill to get U.N. sanctions lifted. The outstanding problem is assumption of responsibility. Is there any state that would take responsibility for the bombing of a civilian aircraft and the killing of 270 people? France took responsibility for bombing the [Greenpeace ship] Rainbow Warrior. Maybe they said they felt sorry for the incident and paid compensation. Would Libya do that? I don't think there is any problem for Libya to do that. We feel sorry irrespective of who did it. Libya also may con-

tribute to the compensation. Your officially designated lawyers signed an offer for \$2.7 billion in compensation for the victims on Oct. 23 of last year. There is nothing official so far. Libya cannot pay such a fine. Haven't there been negotiations for compensation? There have been official negotiations that cover compensation and closing the file once and for all. Are you referring to the ongoing talks between U.S., British and Libyan officials? Yes. We hope an agreement can be reached to solve the Lockerbie problem and provide suitable compensation which Libya alone will not pay. Perhaps Libya and the



U.S. will contribute to a compensation fund. Why would the U.S. contribute? To compensate for the Libyans who were killed in 1986—as well as for the victims of Lockerbie. How much do you think the compensation should be for Kaddafi's daughter who was killed in 1986? If a normal American needs \$10 million, then a daughter of Kaddafi who was killed should be worth billions. In the '80s, you heavily backed terrorist groups. Since then, you expelled Abu Nidal and reportedly have backed off terrorism. Is this so? I supported liberation—not terrorist movements: I supported [Nelson] Mandela and Sam Nujoma, who became

president of Namibia. I also supported the liberation movements of Palestine. If you backed away from terror, was it because of the U.S. 1986 bombing or the subsequent U.N. and U.S. sanctions? Our support was given to liberation movements. Now they are in power, go to the White House and are given red-carpet treatment. But I am still considered a terrorist. One U.S. concern is that Libya is stockpiling chemical weapons and manufacturing other weapons of mass destruction. Are you? Libya has signed all the conventions that prohibit the manufacture of such weapons. And the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] has

routine inspections in Libya. But you have Rabta and other plants said to be making chemical weapons. The issue of Rabta is over. Now foreign companies are working there and it is just a pharmaceutical plant. So you are not developing chemical or biological weapons? We don't need them. They are of no use to us. Israel's Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said that Libya with the help of Iraq would be the first Arab country to develop a nuclear weapon. What is your response? He is crazy. He is just dragging America behind him everywhere he goes. We regret that Sharon has become the president of America.

Would you like to have nuclear weapons? They are of no use to us, and we don't have enough money to manufacture weapons of mass destruction. What do you think of the U.S. approach to Iraq? The issue of Iraq is a strange story. What is the danger Saddam poses? What threat does he constitute? You must know Saddam? I know him well. Is he rational? I don't think so. Will he stay and wait to be killed by American weapons? Even if he is not rational or wise, he does not constitute a threat. But President Bush thinks he does.

Middle East

We don't know who poses a greater threat—the American president or Saddam Hussein. I have never been in agreement with Saddam. But he doesn't deserve this.

On what do you disagree with Saddam?

Over the war he waged against Iran, over his invasion of Kuwait and on the Kurdish issue. I have supported the Kurds.

There have been reports that you will grant Saddam's family shelter in Libya.

Don't think of such a thing. Neither he nor his family will leave Iraq.

Would you agree to shelter him? America has the military capability, so there is no safe haven

he goes anywhere.

Fundamentalism a threat to your regime? It is a threat to all the regimes in the region. But, unfortunately, America has given the fundamentalists a strong pretext to carry on their work.

What's your opinion of bin Laden?

In the Islamic world, he has become a prophet,



BLOODY HISTORY: Palestinians with Libyan connections attacked Rome airport in December 1985 (above); in 1986, U.S. bombers hit the Libyan cities of Benghazi and Tripoli (right) in the largest American bombing raid, at that point, since the Vietnam War



“Perhaps Libya and the U.S. will contribute to a compensation fund. If a normal American needs \$10 million, then a daughter of Kaddafi should be worth billions.”

and all the young people like him.

Is that a threat to you?

course. There have been assassination attempts on you in the past, isn't that so?

Yes. These were made by Qaddafi members.

Do you believe that Saudi Arabia is doing all it can to fight terrorism?

Saudi Arabia is a fundamentalist state itself.

Are you providing the U.S. and other intelligence agencies with information on Al Qaeda?

Intelligence agencies in Libya and the U.S. are exchanging information. There are Libyan terrorists in America and in Britain. The Libyan intelligence service exchanges infor-

mation [with Britain and the United States] so that they will be wiped out.

Your son said recently that Libya should reconsider its cooperation with the West on Al Qaeda. Do you agree?

No, our cooperation in fighting terrorism is irrevocable.

Will there be another attack on the U.S.?

If they can, they will not hesitate. Bin Laden has convinced his followers that America is attacking the whole Arab and Islamic world. He told them in the beginning that America's objective was not only Afghanistan. Now that there is a move against Iraq, it has proven bin Laden right.

When the U.S. talks about Libya, Saudi Arabia and Syria,

—MUAMMAR KADDAFI

he says, “You see, I was correct.” It is not a battle between America and bin Laden anymore. Everybody is with bin Laden.

What advice do you have for Saddam?

He opened his country for full inspections. What more can he do? Now it is a fight to the finish. He must stand against the wall and fight.

Are you worried that America may strike Libya?

In this case, it would mean America wants to colonize the world, and the world will resist.

How do you see the future of Israel and the Palestinians?

There should be one state to solve the problem. It is impos-

sible to have two states in that part of the world.

Does that mean the end of Israel?

What is Israel? Are you talking about Jews or the country?

If you mean the Jews, their security [is guaranteed by] having one state with the Palestinians. If you are talking about a state called Israel and you are concerned about the name, it means sacrificing the safety of the Jews. What's the use of talking about Israel?

Where is Israel? These two people, the Palestinians and the Israelis, will live together—one people, one state.

What is your hope for future Libyan-U.S. relations?

I am optimistic. There are so many American companies eager to come here—whether in oil or other sectors. During the time of wars of liberation, we waged war. Now it is time for peace, and I want to be part of world peace.

Scolding the Dog, Beating a Chicken

Yes, Kaddafi has mellowed. But why? The lessons to be learned from an earlier war on terror.

BY CHRISTOPHER DICKEY

THE RELICS OF ECCENTRICITY remain. In the heart of Tripoli, Libya, in the middle of a military barracks behind walls within walls, a camel grazes and the droppings of other livestock litter a cracked sidewalk leading to the green brocade tent where Libyan leader Muammar Kaddafi chooses to receive visitors. Nearby, the rubble-strewn house where he and his family once lived has been left much as it was after an American bombing raid shattered its façade and crumbled its ceiling in April 1986. But the man himself has mellowed. Gone are the rants of a dictator who seemed to be high on drugs or destiny or both. Gone are the distracted stares, the bizarre costumes. European diplomats and intelligence officials, a British minister of State and the Italian prime minister have found Libya's leader well briefed, reasonable and even cooperative in the war on terror. “The doctors must have got the dosage right,” half-jokes a Western analyst who met Kaddafi in the old days.

What changed? Kaddafi was Washington's public enemy No. 1 in the 1980s, a sort of Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden rolled into one: the embodiment of terrorism, the lunatic bent on acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Is there something to be found in the military-political-economic prescription that quelled Kaddafi which might serve in today's showdowns with Saddam and Osama?

What clearly did not work was a dose of his own violent medicine: the ferocious U.S. bombing attack of 1986. Yet there's a persistent myth that the raid, which killed 41 Libyans including Kaddafi's 15-month-old adopted daughter, somehow subdued the Libyan leader. “After the '86 bombing, Kaddafi lowered his profile on sponsoring terrorism altogether,” says Boaz Ganor, director of the International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism in Israel. In fact, af-



NO BOMBS NOW: Draconian sanctions, diplomacy and legal measures may have worked on Kaddafi

ter the 1986 bombing, which was largely carried out by U.S. F-111s flying from British bases, Kaddafi's focus merely shifted. Instead of openly supporting Palestinian terrorist groups targeting Israelis, he covertly supported terrorists as diverse as the Irish Republican Army and the renegade Japanese Red Army willing to target Americans and Britons. As the Rand Corp.'s Bruce Hoffman writes, “rather than deterring Muammar Kaddafi, the attacks goaded him to further excesses.”

The Reagan administration had come into office in 1981 gunning for the eccentric Libyan leader, even shooting down two of his warplanes. At the time, most of the anti-American terrorism in the Middle East was coming from Iran and Syria. But there's an old Arab proverb: “When you want to scold the dog, beat the chicken.” And Kaddafi's role was the chicken's. According to former U.S. intelligence officials, he was supposed to be the example that taught a lesson to the Ayatollah Khomeini and Hafiz Assad.

After terrorists with Libyan connections attacked El-Al ticket counters in Rome and Vienna at the end of 1985, leaving an American child among the dead, Washington blasted Libyan naval vessels, warplanes and anti-aircraft batteries. A few weeks later, when terrorists blew up a Berlin disco, killing one American and one Turkish woman, Washington intercepted an order for the attack from Libya. That triggered the U.S. strike on Tripoli and Benghazi, the largest bombing raid, at that point, since the Vietnam War. “Today we have done what we had to do,” President Ronald Reagan said. “If necessary, we shall do it again.”

Tough talk, to be sure. But the next year was “the bloodiest year for terrorist incidents since we began compiling such figures,” the State Department concluded. Kaddafi started sending massive arms shipments to the Irish Republican Army to attack the British. By 1988 groups linked to Kaddafi were striking all over the map. An American service club in Naples, Italy, was blown up, killing five people, including a U.S. servicewoman. A hotel in Sudan was attacked and a British family of four slaughtered. Yet the Reagan administration still contended in November 1988 that “these data do not reflect a failed policy” and the Tripoli bombing was “a watershed event in the world's fight against terrorist-supporting states.” A month later Pan Am 103 was blown up over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 270 people. The following year Kaddafi's agents also blew up a French airliner over Africa, killing 171 people, including the wife of a U.S. ambassador.

What finally forced Kaddafi to change his ways? Criminal investigators in Britain and the United States got the goods on Libyan involvement in the Pan Am 103 bombing. The French did the same in the attack on their plane. Then the United Nations imposed draconian sanctions, and eventually at least some of the accused were brought to trial. “It was a diplomatic exercise which we never broke off, and it turned out successfully,” says one of the senior British diplomats who had worked on the case in the early 1990s. What worked on Kaddafi might never have worked on Saddam or Osama. But as the war on terror continues, there is a central lesson to be remembered from the bloody record after 1986. It's the one taught to doctors by Hippocrates: First, do no harm.

WITH JOANNA CHEN in Jerusalem and EMILY FLYNN in London

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